# INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

AT THE

OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION

OF

# MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE,

In connection with University College,

DELIVERED IN UNIVERSITY HALL,

ON

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1853.

BY

JOHN JAMES TAYLER, B.A.,

Principal.

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# INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

The opening of the first session of Manchester New College, on its removal from the position which it has occupied for considerably more than half a century in the North of England, and its annexation, as a School of Theology and Religious Philosophy, to a national seat of Secular learning in the Metropolis, seems to afford a suitable opportunity for taking a brief review of the relation of our Institution to the general condition of learning and religion in this country, of the higher requirements and wider prospects which the diffused intelligence of the times brings to the Christian Ministry, and of the superior advantages for the training of men to that important office, and for acting with increased effect on the state of public opinion, which, it may be hoped, our Academy will enjoy, under the new circumstances to which it is now transferred.

For the information of those, if any, now present, who may be strangers to our religious denomination, and to rectify the misapprehensions so often prevalent among such as might be supposed to be better acquainted with it, I think it may be well to state at the outset the precise nature of the relation in which Manchester New College now stands to University College and University Hall.—Manchester New College, at its first establishment in 1786, in the city from which it takes its name, was intended to embrace in its course of Academic instruction, the education of both laymen and divines. On its transference to York in 1803, the same plan was pursued; and during the seven-and-thirty years of its continuance in that city, not only a large proportion of the ministers who now fill the most important pulpits in our denomination, but many also of our laymen who have since risen to stations of honour and influence in the country, received their education under the learned and excellent men

who at that time conducted its studies and maintained its reputation. In 1840, it was brought back to Manchester, and the plan of combined instruction for laymen and divines was attempted anew. Success, however, did not correspond to expectation;—not from any lack of zeal or ability in the several distinguished men who had charge of its secular department, but because the superior attractions and advantages of University College naturally drew off from it the supply of lay students, and almost entirely superseded, as far as they were concerned, the necessity for a separate denominational institution. Some of the best friends, therefore, of the College came to the conclusion, that as our young divines and our young laymen might henceforth have access to an abundant supply of the best secular learning at a national source, our only need in future would be to provide ourselves with the theological, and in some degree the philosophical, instruction which the central institution, by the terms of its foundation, was precluded from furnishing. The establishment of University Hall for the residence, the domestic discipline, and the private tuition of young men resorting to the classes of University College, strengthened this view of our true Academic interest, and pointed out the way in which it might be advantageously carried into effect. The direct and principal object of Manchester New College from this time forth, will be the education of men for the Christian ministry; but its connection with University Hall will afford its teachers the opportunity of regularly imparting to young laymen, during their course of Academic study, the religious and ethical instruction which is indispensable to the completeness of a liberal education, and which University College cannot supply. For divinity students, Manchester New College prescribes a course of six years. Of these, the three first will be devoted to literary and scientific studies in the classes of University College; during the continuance of which, the needful test of proficiency will be applied to those who have been confided to its care, by periodical examinations from time to time in the course of each session, conducted by its own officers—its own teachers supplying, wherever necessary, some branches of instruction which are required for matriculation and a degree. The three last years will be occupied exclusively with Theology and preparation for the Christian Ministry; and this part of the course will embrace the Criticism and Exegesis of the Scriptures, studied in the original languages

—the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion—Ecclesiastical History, accompanied by select Patristical reading—Doctrinal and Practical Theology, including a view of Christian Ethics—and weekly exercises in Composition and Elocution. The Library of Manchester New College is deposited, and its class-rooms are assigned, in University Hall. Its students, even when not residents in the Hall, are enabled and encouraged to connect themselves closely with its discipline and partake of its influences.* Thus University Hall is the link which connects Manchester New College as a Theological Institute, with University College as a seat of Secular learning. The lay and divinity students who assemble for instruction and discipline within its walls, are each presided over and represented by their respective Principals, whose cordial union and co-operation must bring them more and more under the control and guidance of a common Academic system. I look forward with confidence to the uninterrupted continuance and deepening intimacy of that union and co-operation ; and I anticipate the happiest effect on the future condition of our churches, from the intermingling of our young laymen and our destined ministers in the halls and class-rooms of their Alma Mater, and from the friendships contracted between them in the open-hearted years of youth, amidst the generous rivalries of an honourable ambition, and the still nobler sympathies of a common thirst for knowledge and an united pursuit of truth.

Our old Universities, in the spirit of their institutions and in their characteristic influence and tendency, represent the interests of the Church and the Aristocracy. As a fitting response to the new demands of a more advanced age, the plan of a National University in the Metropolis was conceived by a number of enlightened men in the earlier part of this century, for the special benefit of those classes, containing so much of the freedom and vigour of our national mind, who feel themselves excluded, on whatever grounds, from the ancient seats of English learning, and who, up to the time of the new foundation, had endeavoured to supply the want for the education of their ministers, and in some degree for that of their laymen, by the maintenance of small denominational Academies in different parts of the kingdom. The limited range of instruction corresponding to limited

* Nearly all the Manchester New College students have already become non-resident members of University Hall.

resources, and the narrow, sectarian spirit,—an unavoidable result of exclusive association,—which under the most favourable circumstances had been more or less inseparable from the old Nonconformist system, would be remedied, it was hoped, by the higher influences of a truly national institution, that might command the service of the most eminent learning and ability in every department of literature and science, and must soften down party prejudice by attracting to a common centre the youth of all religious persuasions, and engaging them in the joint prosecution of an ennobling intellectual culture. The University of London has abandoned its original design, and assumed a new relation to the various seminaries of the higher learning spread over the country. But University College, which inherits its position and represents its fundamental principle, is still aiming to accomplish the same important purpose, which the first conception of the University itself had chiefly in view. That it has not to the full extent realized the expectations which the earliest projection of a scheme so liberal and so comprehensive excited in many sanguine minds, must be imputed, I fear, in part to the comparative apathy and indifference of the very classes whose benefit was specially proposed in its foundation. There was one imperfection, it must be confessed, in the scheme; but it was an inevitable result of the conditions under which alone it could be honestly carried into execution, and of the divided state of religious opinion to which it had to be applied. The new institution could not, without breaking faith with some of the parties whose mental elevation it sought to promote, and whose conscientious scruples it had sworn to respect, make any direct provision for theological instruction, or even for those higher branches of philosophic discipline which involve in them the elements of theological warfare. An ungenerous use was made of this deficiency, to the prejudice of the London University, and in the name of Religion—by many, who would far better have served religion by pointing out and facilitating, as they easily might, the means of its removal. If, acknowledging the want which the University, and subsequently the College, could not, from the nature of its constitution, itself supply—but grateful, nevertheless, for the full recognition of the noble principle which occasioned it—all who felt that religious culture was indispensable to the completeness of an Academic course, had only done, what the spirited founders of this Hall have done—opened

class-rooms where instruction might be given, in accordance with their own principles, on those subjects which could not be brought within the prescribed range of studies in the national College,—they would have met the difficulty, not only in the sole way that was possible, but, more than that, in the very way which more effectually than any other would have attained the object so earnestly desired. Europe might then, for the first time, have rejoiced at the spectacle of a national seat of education, which was based on the principle of religious freedom and equality, where Catholic and Protestant, Churchman and Dissenter, Christian, Jew and Theist, Believer and Unbeliever, alike enjoyed unobstructed access to the fountains of secular learning—but which at the same time rendered full homage to the indestructible sentiment of religion, as it is variously conceived and appropriated by the human mind, in the encouragement which it gave to the most diversified schools of theological belief, to come and cluster round it on every side. A centre of University learning surrounded by these various opportunities of spiritual culture and theological instruction, would be only a fitting expression of the rich and manifold religious life which is a fruit of our English freedom; and to doubt that Christianity and the truest spirit of Religion would be benefited by such an arrangement, is to want all depth of faith, and to admit that our strongest convictions must lose their hold upon us, as soon as they are looked at from opposite points of view. For there is a common vitality at the root of all our different forms of Christian belief—there are seeds of imperishable truth common, as I believe, to every modification of genuine religious feeling—which it is strengthening to our own faith, to see brought out and presented under new aspects to the mind, by the able and conscientious expounders of various creeds. What earnest searcher after truth would not esteem it a privilege to have an opportunity now and then, during his Academic years, of hearing the strong points of the ancient faith of Christendom elucidated by such accomplished teachers as Möhler or a John Henry Newman—of knowing what can be said for the Anglican system by such men as Arnold, Conybeare or Hare—of weighing the arguments produced for a learned Unitarianism by a Kenrick or a Norton—or of considering the plea for Orthodox Nonconformity as set forth by a Robert Hall or a Pye Smith? Who would not rejoice to be made acquainted with the moral and spiritual resources of Judaism by an enlightened Rabbi; or to

learn how much could be brought out of simple Theism for the consolation and guidance of mankind, by any earnest and reverential asserter of its principles? In a seat of learning, circumstanced as I have now supposed, where sectarian bitterness would be tempered by the amenities of a high intellectual culture, and all the ascendant influences would promote a reverential toleration, any teacher, to whatever persuasion he might belong, who was eminent in his own department, would be sure to attract to his lectures occasionally, and for particular parts of his course, many hearers not denominationally connected with him, to whom he could not fail to impart new and wider views of religious truth. Such are some of the facilities and encouragements which, it has ever seemed to me, an Academic institution, based on the principles of University College, might offer for the more perfect cultivation of indispensable branches of learning, not embraced within the range of its own discipline, and of which I cannot but regret that the various bodies of religionists have not as yet made any adequate use. I look on the junction of our own Theological Institute with University College as a recurrence, after some hesitation and delay, to the true Academic policy, and a movement altogether in the right direction; and I believe that the adoption by other denominations of the same course, so as to nurse into strength and productiveness the central institution, and enable it to oppose an unquestioned reputation for thorough scholarship and accurate science to the admitted claims of the old Universities—would, by raising the character, promote the truest interest, of Nonconformity, as an important element in our national life, and best meet the requirements and coincide with the strongest present tendencies of the public mind.

If I interpret that mind aright, the age of rigid dogmatism, of narrow, hard sectarianism, is gone—and nothing can bring it back. The very struggles of its blinded adherents to keep it where it is, only accelerate the tendencies which are sweeping it to its final destruction. But if it is not to be followed by a period of heartless indifference and vague unbelief, there must be an union, such as a great centre of national learning naturally invites, among earnest and enlightened men of all persuasions, for placing the cultivation of theology on a wider and more liberal basis, that by free interchange of thought, and a candid recognition of whatever is beautiful and true in their respective systems, they may gradually prepare the way for the ascendancy of a larger, a

more generous and a more catholic Christianity. Such a change is to be promoted, not by compromise and vacillation—not by surrendering our hereditary position, where we know it to be strong, or giving up one doctrinal point which our forefathers have satisfactorily established—but by earnestly developing from our own point of view, the various links of spiritual affinity which connect us with the good and devout of other denominations, and striving honestly to pierce through the outward form and first aspect of doctrines, to the hidden kernel of essential truth which is so often to be found within them.

The religious life of England, as it shews itself at present in large outward manifestation, is mainly resolvable into two elements—that of our Protestant hierarchy, with its associated Universities, as modified at the Reformation, and that which subsists in the free life and varied action of our multitudinous Nonconformity. Its peculiarity results from the action and reaction of these two elements on each other. In the present state of things, it is not desirable that one of these elements should entirely absorb the other. Each can plead some historical justification of its existence. We cannot yet wholly dispense with either. If the dissolution of the Church of England into a mere voluntary sect, with the breaking up and dispersion of its vast territorial machinery, would certainly destroy some elements of order, conservatism and refinement, which are essential to the health of our highly-organized civilization, still more fatal to all progress and vitality would be the extinction of an earnest and enlightened Dissent, under the dead weight of an oppressive uniformity. What is to be desired for both these elements, is freer scope for internal expansion and reform, that each may fully develop its peculiar capacity for usefulness, and do its part effectually towards realizing in the future some nobler result than either at present could separately yield. Till the Church of England has undergone further reformation, and is restored to a closer dependence on the religious mind of the country,—to which it properly belongs, and of which it ought to be a faithful expression,—the Universities which are so intimately connected with the Church, however much their studies may be widened and their discipline improved, cannot furnish an atmosphere sufficiently pure and free for the vigorous growth of that kind of learning on which the spirit of Nonconformity subsists. All that we can at present insist on, in regard to them

and to the Church, as a guarantee for present freedom and future reform, is the great constitutional principle, that their immense revenues—that invaluable educational fund—belong in no sense to the clergy, who hold them only in trust, but to the entire people of this realm, and that they are applicable to any moral and spiritual uses which the people, speaking through its legitimate organs, shall at any time see fit to decree. In the mean while, if Nonconformity would sustain its historical character and exercise its just influence in our social economy, it must make other provision for its highest mental wants than such as the old Universities can supply. For Nonconformity—let the fashionable world say of it what they will—when we review its traditions and calculate its possibilities, is, after all, a great and stirring element of our national life, with vast resources of intellectual power as yet undeveloped for want of adequate culture and a fitting discipline. Its vigorous but conflicting elements need to be combined and harmonized, and have the broad impress of a noble nationality stamped on them, by the binding force of a common Academic centre; that it may take its place among the higher potencies of the land—that it may be led on in the march of progress and the battle for freedom by an intellectual aristocracy of its own—and rear up a learning, sustained by the sympathies of an awakened and instructed people, thorough, manly and vigorous, based on religious liberty and instinct with a principle of growth, to confront an elder learning, tenacious of the accumulations of ages, fixing its eye reverentially on the past, and polished into dignified courtesy by long intercourse with nobles and kings.

Considering the great importance of a supplementary provision for theological instruction attached to a national seat of learning like University College, we may notice some peculiar advantages for the attainment of this object in the hereditary principles of the religious body which is represented by Manchester New College. It has been for a century and a half the distinction of the English Presbyterians to repudiate the authority of all ecclesiastical creeds, to seek for Christianity in the Scriptures alone, and to submit those Scriptures to the unfettered scrutiny of the inquiring mind; and this broad, general principle is of more value than any particular doctrinal result to which it may have brought us, in the almost universal adoption of Unitarianism—because it plainly authorizes us never to close the door against

the admission of any new conclusions that may be suggested by farther reflection and continued research. It is not possible, indeed, for any number of persons to enter into religious association without some great leading principle, held in common, to bind them together; or for any teacher of theology, if his instructions are to be worth anything, to be without clear and strong convictions of his own; any more than a man of science can conduct a manufacturing process, or construct a public work, without some positive views of chemical and mechanical laws, or teach his science systematically from the Professor's chair without the adoption of some guiding theory. But all such views and theories are held provisionally, in relation to some practical application that is to be made of the undoubted facts on which they rest, and always subject to the limitations and corrections of prolonged inquiry. What is obviously required by common sense and a regard to truth, both in scientific and in theological teaching, is this,—that the Professor in either case, assuming a certain circle of facts, whether moral or physical, as the immediate subject of his instructions, shall be at full liberty to investigate and interpret them according to his honest belief of their inherent significance, and his perception of their relation to other groups of facts, in the world of man and in the world of matter, which constitute, together with them, the grand sum-total of this wonderful universe.

Man's indestructible consciousness of the spiritual affinities which connect him with the invisible Sovereignty of all things, and the historical expression, in its most perfect form, of that consciousness in the person and work of Jesus Christ, with their transforming influence on the condition of humanity through all ensuing time, furnish, as I apprehend it, the proper subject-matter of Christian theology; and till the facts which it assumes, shall be dissolved into mere phantoms of the imagination, or shall be shewn to have lost entirely their ancient meaning and value, Christian theology must keep its place among the most important departments of learning and speculation, and cannot be excluded from any course of Academic study which pretends to completeness.

There are some domains, if not of positive knowledge, yet of feeling and sentiment, and of those fundamental convictions which silently pervade and inform the whole moral life of man, in which, by a benevolent provision for the future harmonious

development of humanity, the ultimate limit appears to have been reached, and the attainable type of perfection fixed, in the ages which have long passed away. Pure science, indeed, evolved out of the accumulation and comparison of facts, and their resolution into proximate laws, goes on with ever-swelling and ever-deepening stream from generation to generation; nor can we assign any limit to the possibilities of our future acquaintance with the structure and economy of the material universe. But this boundless field of fact does not furnish from itself, apart from the light cast on it by the contemplating mind, any explanation of its own meaning and purpose. It then only rises into harmony and significance, and becomes expressive of a great central thought, a grand moral idea, when it is reduced under principles, and surveyed from aspects, which were struck out by the deep forecast of genius and inspiration in the comparative infancy of our race. Without the guiding laws of truth and beauty which have been exemplified or inculcated in the master works of classical antiquity, and those higher moral and spiritual truths which have been bequeathed to us by an antiquity more venerable still, how would society have worked its way through the oppressive accumulation of new facts and the empiricism of an ever-widening experience! To Greece and Palestine we owe the present condition of civilized man. Strike out of the past the influence of their great minds—their poets, their sages, their prophets—and how incalculably different would have been the whole course of human history! What a different race would now be spread over Europe and America! What a wild and shoreless ocean of experiences, dim and unmeaning as that which now covers China or Thibet, would have rolled over the perplexed and darkened spirits of men! But the power still working with deepest effect amid the agencies now operative on Europe, grows out of the fact of Christianity and its associated beliefs. For man's highest aim and surest guidance, we discover nothing within the apparent possibilities and prospects of the human race, to supersede the influence which has flowed down to us from the fountains of Hebrew inspiration, and to eclipse the type of religious perfection in the life of Christ; till the present conditions of our planet shall be changed to make way for a new geological era, and human nature as now constituted shall be succeeded by some nobler form of intellectual and spiritual existence. From the limits which confine, and the laws which

govern, the possible growth and development of our race, and from the indissoluble connection of our past history with any future which may await us, we may safely pronounce Christian theology, thus widely interpreted, running back on one hand into historical realities, and shooting down on the other into the immutable principles of the human soul, to possess within itself all the conditions of a permanent and progressive branch of human learning. The facts on which it rests are fixed and unchangeable; in the conception and application of those facts, there is endless scope for the varied exercise of practical and philosophic wisdom, and free range for the boldest wing of religious poetry.

It is to this highest subject of human thought and interest, and a faithful administration of its influences to the varied requirements of the world, that the Christian Minister dedicates his life. There are those, I know, who think that his function is rapidly being superseded by more recent and more popular agencies of good. They remind us that the truths which he once almost exclusively proclaimed, are now finding their way in a more attractive form, through innumerable channels, to myriads and myriads of human souls; that the journalist is taking the place of the preacher; that the exciting pages which may be purchased at any railway station, are producing an effect which in former times far less surely and constantly followed a sermon; that the lecture-room, the picture-gallery, the concert-hall, and even the theatre, are supplying the mind with richer and more stimulating spiritual food, than the dull truisms dealt out week after week in the church. And it is impossible to deny the power of these influences—to deny that there is in them a great capacity of good. If the pulpit would keep its position in society, it must become more earnest and fervid; it must address itself more to living realities and actual convictions; it must quit its beaten track of conventional topics, and bring the whole field of human action and interest within its wider view. But make every concession to the new agencies, and every deduction from the old—is there anything, after all, which can fill the place hitherto occupied in society by the Christian Church? Where else can those scattered influences of good and beauty which stream in upon us irregularly in our passage through the world, be gathered up and concentrated with such a solemn earnestness, blended with our sense of duty and of dependence on God, subjected to the grand

formative law of our moral being, and interpreted in the light of that divine character which is the religious type of humanity? And it is the Christian Minister who is summoned to perform with faithfulness and humility this service for a brother's soul. What human vocation, measured by its intrinsic nobleness and not by the judgment of the world, is more exalted than this? The highest studies should prepare it. The finest endowments, intellectual and moral, may be exercised in it. When we see how much knowledge and ability are constantly devoted to the meanest occupations, which offer nothing to interest either the head or the heart, it does seem strange, that to a vocation so truly noble as the Christian Ministry,—representing not the priestly, but the prophetic, function of ancient times,—some men out of every class in life—all, of whatever origin and connections, who are conscious of any sympathy with the work and spirit of Christ—should not feel themselves irresistibly attracted, as to a field which affords exercise for their highest faculties and affections, and presents opportunities of the noblest usefulness. God, says our great Puritan poet, in one of his eloquent protests against a selfish, time-serving ministry,—God "can stir up rich fathers to bestow exquisite education upon their children, and so dedicate them to the service of the Gospel; he can make the sons of nobles his ministers, and princes to be Nazarites; for certainly there is no employment more honourable, more worthy to take up a great spirit, more requiring a generous and free nurture, than to be the messenger and herald of heavenly truth from God to man, and, by the faithful work of holy doctrine, to procreate a number of faithful men, making a kind of creation like to God's, by infusing his spirit of likeness into them, to their salvation, as God did into him; arising, to what climate soever he turn him, like that Sun of Righteousness that sent him, with healing in his wings, and new light to break in upon the chill and gloomy hearts of his hearers, raising out of darksome barrenness a delicious and fragrant spring of saving knowledge and good works."*

Two obstacles have stood in the way of this just and natural direction of public feeling—the slavery of hierarchies, and the frequent meanness and dependency of sectarianism. As respects the latter, two remedies suggest themselves for its removal: first, a higher preliminary education, which shall enrich the soul with the

* Milton's Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus.

spirit of self-dependence and of quiet, inward dignity, and make the poor but highminded scholar, even in an humble station, a nobler and happier being, than the mercenary and sensual worldling in the midst of his wealth ; and, secondly, such an improved constitution of our religious societies as shall secure to ministers more freedom of action and speech, and provide for them more certain and adequate subsistence, but, above all, shall aid and foster their labours with a larger demonstration of that loving interest and sympathy which is more genial and refreshing to a human soul than the outward honour coldly paid to mere eminence of position in the world. But here, as in all other things, there has been action and reaction. If the mean and dependent condition to which the Christian Ministry is too often reduced, repels men of refined and sensitive natures—all whose feelings and aptitudes are in closest harmony with its objects—from entering it; sometimes, also, it must be confessed, the low qualifications of those who assume its functions, deter congregations from making the efforts of which they are capable, to improve its condition. I do not excuse either party. There has been grievous deficiency on both sides. Evil, arise where it may, is sure to beget and perpetuate corresponding evil. Our wisdom now is, not to look back on a past which cannot be recalled, but forward into a richer and brighter future which we may make our own. Of this I am certain, that if only a few men of high gifts and high culture shall hereafter take up the Christian Ministry in a disinterested spirit and with an earnest purpose, they will at once act on the temper of our congregations, and stimulate them to new exertions, as soon as it is seen that the services of men worthy of such exertions, can only thus be secured.

I would observe, in conclusion, that, independently of providing for the suitable education of men devoted to the Christian Ministry, and even in case the number of aspirants to that office should still continue limited, it is of importance to the true interests of learning and a thorough culture of the human mind, that the study of theology and religious philosophy should be adequately maintained in connection with every seat of the higher education. It is a serious defect in the institutions of Nonconformists generally, that they are too exclusively adapted to popular action and influence, and do not afford a sufficiency of direct encouragement to the pursuit of abstract truth and the cultivation of deep and original learning. The class of men who are

most active in supporting them, are too eager for immediate and palpable results, and often ask, with utilitarian impatience and short-sightedness, What is the use of all this speculation and research? It may be replied to them, that there are many principles at work in society, and fraught with wide-spread effects, whose existence is not very perceptible on the surface of things. None but those who have closely studied the history of opinion, would suspect the silent and searching influence that penetrates into every region of human thought and action, from the solitary chamber of the patient student and profound thinker. Ruhnken, whose universal scholarship well qualified him to attest the fact, has told us, that he could trace the mind of Plato in the sentiments and even in the phraseology of Greek writers of every class, far down into the eventful period which is marked by the transition from Heathenism to Christianity. Paley, in the Preface to his Moral Philosophy, has made a similar remark on the wide-spread influence of the abstract reasonings of Locke and Rousseau. What constantly strikes one in society, is the absence, even among educated men, of first principles — such principles, I mean, as go down to the root of a matter and furnish the true solution of a question — on the most important topics of Morals, Government, Religion, Christianity, the moment conversation quits the beaten round of recognized party opinion in which the ideas of the majority mechanically revolve. This often arises, not from unwillingness to inquire, or aversion to the trouble of forming an independent judgment, but from inability to ascertain the facts and work out the principles which are necessary to a rational opinion; although, if those facts and principles were once submitted on reliable authority, the common sense of mankind, however incompetent to elaborate them for itself, would at once perceive the truth contained in them and be able to apply it. It is indispensable, therefore, to the maintenance of a high standard of mental culture and an enlightened condition of public opinion, that some provision should be attached to every seat of learning for the undisturbed prosecution, by a few competent men, of those more recondite studies which do not lie in immediate proximity to the popular interest and persuasion of the day, but which penetrate, nevertheless, to the hidden source of the deeper power that silently moulds and directs them. A large audience and conspicuous social position are not essential to the production of

strong and lasting effect upon society. The love of truth and moral earnestness are conditions of far more importance. Who can estimate the influence which Saumur, Amsterdam, and even Warrington, exercised on the Protestant mind of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Doddridge's Correspondence and Wesley's Diary attest the profound impression of Dr. John Taylor's writings and teachings on the opinions of his contemporaries; yet the highest position he ever reached, was that of Professor of Divinity and Moral Philosophy at Warrington. Le Clerc and Limborch belonged to no great hierarchy, and lectured in a private academy; yet their instructions influenced the current of theological thought throughout Europe. Two men of competent acquirements and abilities, with leisure and repose of mind to concentrate all their energies on their proper function, would abundantly suffice, under ordinary circumstances, for the adequate cultivation of theology in all its essential branches. For Christian theology may be comprehensively distributed under two principal heads—the historical and the philosophical. We have, first, to study the phenomena of man's religious consciousness, as they lie scattered over the records of ages, or are embodied in the sacred literature which most purely and prominently expresses them; and, secondly, to explore and evolve the principles which underlie those phenomena and explain them, and to assign them their place and working in the general constitution of human nature. We may abjure philosophy as much as we choose in the study of theology; but every form of religious belief implies a philosophy, crude or matured, and cannot be separated from it. History and philosophy must go hand in hand, for either to yield a satisfactory result. History would merely accumulate barren and unmeaning facts, unless it could combine and distribute them according to some organic law which has its source in philosophy; and philosophy would beat the air with vain words, and cheat the mind with a juggle of unprofitable abstractions, unless it rooted itself in that deep human consciousness which finds an ever-varying expression in the facts of universal history. I will not disguise my earnest hope, that a foundation is this day laid for a thorough and scientific cultivation of theology through many future years, under the blended influences of freedom and holy reverence, in permanent connection with a rising, a noble, and, what I trust we may hereafter with still more appropriateness call, a national seat of English learning.

In the foregoing remarks, I have expressed what I think desirable—what it will be my wish to aim at—not what I can myself hope to accomplish. On the first transition to a new state of things, our endeavours must to a considerable extent be tentative, and obstructed inevitably with many unforeseen difficulties. We must do, not what in itself perhaps might be best, but what is possible. I can truly say, that I look upon myself as but a pioneer for better men to come after me. If, by diligence and fidelity I can safely and successfully conduct our Academy through its first years of trial and difficulty, I shall feel I have fulfilled my humble share of duty, and be prepared to resign the helm to abler and more experienced hands. Perhaps my fittest title to the responsible office in which circumstances have placed me, will be found in the strong conviction which I have always entertained of the desirableness of the change now made in the external position of Manchester New College, and my determined purpose, through such years of health and vigour as may remain for me, to give proof, if possible, to the public, that it was a necessary and a beneficial change. It is always good, however, to set a high ideal before us, conscious as we may be of inability fully to attain it. Dissent has been incalculably injured by keeping its standard of culture and refinement low. We have not striven, as we ought, to lift up our condition to the height of our ideas, but too often been content to bring down our ideas to the level of our condition. No enthusiasm—the parent of all that is great and good—can possibly co-exist with such a state of things. May the influences diffused from this Hall tend effectually to introduce a better! The courtesy and consideration which from the first I have myself experienced from its authorities, are to me an encouraging omen of future good. Birth and worldly riches are not the things that we value here. Every man, be his origin what it may, who passes with effect through the refining influences of a high education, is completely raised by them above all that is mean and vulgar, and is fit for the companionship of the noblest in the land. For the spirit of religion is essentially the spirit of courtesy; and Manchester New College and University Hall will not miss their highest aim, if they shall combine to form men who unite in their characters, their attainments and their bearing, the three elements of the Christian, the Scholar and the Gentleman. To exert that blended and most benignant influence on the dark, degraded and sorrowing masses

of our kind—to comfort, reclaim, instruct and elevate them—to make them men, citizens, Christians—is the noblest mission to which mind and heart can devote themselves; and for such mission it is the office of our institution to prepare the minds and hearts that are confided to it. In discharging the duties which grow out of that office, I know I may rely on the help and encouragement of my respected colleague, Mr. Smith,—of my friend, the Principal of University Hall, whose parentage and inherited principles, not less than his scientific reputation, proclaim his eminent fitness for the important situation which he holds,—and of my still earlier friend and venerated instructor, the excellent Visitor of Manchester New College, whose name is a guarantee that any institution with which he is associated, will protect with equal care the interests of religion and of learning. I advisedly connect religion with learning, because I am sure they can never be separated without mutual injury. It will be our true policy, I am persuaded, to take a decided position from the first on our distinguishing religious principle. Let it express as spiritual and catholic a Christianity as our forefathers ever contended for, or as the religious temper of the present times shall demand; but let it be distinctly avowed and consistently acted on. We gain nothing but universal distrust by compromise and concealment. Let men of every creed, if they will,—the Catholic and the Jew,—find shelter under our roof and welcome at our board, and learn with us that best of lessons, that men with differing creeds may be brothers still; but let not their presence withhold us from the freest exercise and fullest enjoyment of a religious communion, in which we do not compel them to join, but which they would not respect us the more, for denying to those whose religious convictions are in harmony with our own. I trust that as our united institution develops its proper character, it will be more distinctly surrounded by religious influences, and its onward course be consecrated and blest by those daily and weekly exercises of social worship, without which no place of education can fashion as it ought the mind and character of youth, and permanently elevate the social condition of mankind.